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ABSTRACT

In 1990, a feasibility study was conducted to determine the usefulness of volunteers in the day-to-day operations of Germanna Community College. A questionnaire was distributed to 18 administrative and support staff personnel; 17 responses were received. Questions focused on respondents' opinions of the need for volunteers, type of assistance which volunteers could provide, volunteer recruitment, supervision of volunteers, and the advantages and disadvantages of volunteer use. Questionnaire findings included the following: (1) two-thirds of the respondents opposed the use of volunteers; (2) major reasons for not wanting to use volunteers were concern over confidentiality, lack of dependability, less commitment, complex scheduling, amount of training time, and quality control; (3) the most frequently cited advantages of using volunteers were budget savings, higher motivation, student involvement, and extra help at peak times; (4) routine clerical tasks, such as answering the telephone, typing, and filing, were the most frequently mentioned assignments for volunteers; (5) the personnel office and department heads were identified as the recommended contact point for recruitment; and (6) support staff workers were generally considered most likely to train volunteers, and department heads were most often suggested for monitoring activities and terminating volunteers if necessary. Study findings suggested that there was no justification for a coordinated college-wide approach to volunteer recruitment and use. The questionnaire and a cover letter are appended. (WJT)

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FEASIBILITY STUDY
CONCERNING
THE USE OF VOLUNTEERS
AT GERMANNA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

JC 900 282

Prepared by:
Office of Institutional Research
April 30, 1990

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FEASIBILITY STUDY CONCERNING THE USE OF VOLUNTEERS AT GERMANNA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

SUMMARY

Germanna administrators and selected support staff personnel were asked to evaluate the use of volunteers to aid in the day-to-day operation of the College. Two-thirds of the seventeen respondents opposed the use of volunteers. Among the major reasons for not wanting to use volunteers were (1) concern over confidentiality, (2) lack of dependability, (3) less commitment, (4) complex scheduling, (5) amount of training time, and (6) quality control.

Of those favoring the use of volunteers, the most frequently cited advantages were (1) budget savings, (2) higher motivation, (3) student involvement, and (4) extra help at peak times. In most cases only a limited number of volunteers, one or two, were considered usable and for only a few hours per week. In total it was estimated that budget savings could approximate $20,000 per year.

Routine clerical tasks such as answering the telephone, typing, and filing were the most frequently mentioned assignments for volunteers.

No one source was dominant for recruitment. The Personnel Office and department heads were identified as the recommended contact point with the latter considered the highest level for granting approval for the use of volunteers. Support staff workers were generally considered most likely to train volunteers and department heads were most often suggested for monitoring activities and, if necessary, for terminating a volunteer. In most cases where volunteers were encouraged, students were considered acceptable.

It appeared that a collegewide approach to recruiting and engaging volunteers could not be justified although their assistance might offer advantages to some college areas during labor-intensive time periods. Not addressed were legal implications including College liability for job performance and personal injury.

FEASIBILITY STUDY CONCERNING
THE USE OF VOLUNTEERS
AT GERMANNA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

INTRODUCTION

One of the issues in the College's 1989-90 Master Plan was the exploration of the use of volunteers. Although volunteers have been used successfully at some colleges, it was unknown as to whether there was interest at Germanna to try such an experiment. This issue was assigned to the Institutional Research Office and identified as a 1989-90 objective.

METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire was distributed on March 27, 1990, to eighteen administrative and support staff personnel. A follow-up reminder was distributed on April 5, 1990. Seventeen responses were received.

In several instances multiple answers were received when a single response was requested. In those cases the answer choice listed first was considered as the response rather than declare the questionnaire invalid.

FINDINGS

Question I. - Need. Of the seventeen returns, six indicated a personnel need existed in the respondent's office or department and the need could be satisfied by volunteers. The eleven other responses rejected the idea of volunteers. The survey was not designed to determine the adequacy of staffing and those who rejected the use of volunteers were directed to answer no further questions and to return the questionnaire. Many who responded negatively to the use of volunteers added comments, two of whom offered extensive comments. The thrust of those comments was that volunteers were already enlisted to perform in such capacities as advisory boards, CBS, Local College Board, Germanna Educational foundation Board, fund raising activities, and temporary, short-term assistance.

Since the question specifically referred to day-to-day operation of the College, the comments were useful but not directly applicable to the survey and, therefore, not tabulated. Generally, the other comments cited lack of commitment, unreliability, and training and supervisory concerns as the reasons for not wanting this kind of assistance.

The six who did believe that volunteers could satisfy a personnel need in their office preferred one or two people. The responses indicated a substantial range in the number of hours volunteers could be used; from less than forty to over 640 per

semester with 161 to 320 being the median choice. Using the midpoint of each choice, the total hours were approximated as follows:

Hours		Fall		Spring		Summer	
Choice	Mid	No.	Hrs.	No.	Hrs.	No.	Hrs.
Under 40	(20)	2	40	2	40	1	20
41-80	(60)	1	60	1	60	1	60
81-160	(120)	0		0		0	
161-320	(240)	1	240	1	240	1	240
321-480	(400)	1	400	1	400	1	400
481-640	(560)	0		0		0	
Over 640	(640)	1	640	1	640	1	640
			1,380		1,380		1,360

Note that the "over 640" choice used 640 as the mid-point because that number of semester hours equated to 40 hours per week. The total number of hours amounted to 4,120 and, using an average pay rate of five dollars per hour, the total value approximated $20,600. Fall and spring semester usage slightly exceeded that of the summer.

Question II. - Type of Assistance. Of the several types of assistance which could be provided by volunteers, answering the telephone, typing, and filing were checked most frequently. Each

of the available choices received at least one selection. A tabulation appears below.

Activity	Responses
Answering telephone	4
Typing	4
Filing	4
Duplicating	3
Cataloging	2
Greeting public	2
Testing	1
Enhancing grounds	1
Recordkeeping	1
Data entry	1
Distributing mail	1

Write-in choices added to the list included peer counseling, addressing envelopes, housekeeping, folding brochures, maintaining scrap books and history files, taping texts, tutoring, recruiting, and assisting with computers.

Question III - Recruitment. Each of the three predetermined media choices, newspapers, newsletters, and word-of-mouth, received nearly the same number of selections. Additional choices included referral, personal contacts, bulletin board, and radio announcements.

Five of the six respondents indicated student volunteers would be acceptable. Testing was a qualified exclusion for student usage.

The choice between Personnel Officer and department head as the first point of contact for volunteers was evenly divided with three each. However, four indicated the highest level of administrative approval for final acceptance of a volunteer should be the department head while two selected the appropriate dean.

Nearly all (5) responded that a staff worker would train the volunteer. Responsibility for assignment of tasks was evenly divided between the department head and staff worker with three votes each. The department head was recommended to monitor results four out of six times with the staff worker named twice. In all six cases it was the department head who was recommended to effect termination.

Question V - Opinions. This question was aimed at finding reasons supporting volunteers and identifying cautions that even those in favor of volunteers found necessary to observe. Only respondents who answered positively to using volunteers were asked to comment on the advantages and disadvantages of their use. Inherent advantages of volunteers were considered to be budget savings, higher degree of motivation, community and student

involvement, and more hands to accomplish necessary tasks. On the other hand, less dependable, less commitment, complex scheduling, lack of knowledge, training time, and quality control were listed as disadvantages.

CONCLUSIONS

About two-thirds of the respondents rejected the use of volunteers. This suggests either serious reservations about the use of volunteers or that there were few unfilled personnel needs. Probably many of the disadvantages noted by those desiring the use of volunteers were among the reasons why those rejecting volunteers did so. However, none of those recommending the use of volunteers cited difficulty in training nor monitoring results. It appeared that those in favor of using volunteers felt comfortable that the volunteers could be utilized effectively.

Those who wanted to use volunteers were prepared to use them for varying periods of time; probably about half-time. As noted, the wage value of this usage was calculated to be in excess of $20,000.

It would seem that a coordinated collegewide approach to recruiting and using volunteers cannot be justified. It also seems that departments wishing to supplement their staff with volunteers are prepared to do so effectively. Therefore, it is recommended that a College policy permitting interested departments to initiate

volunteer programs be considered. If a volunteer program is approved, legal implications such as College liability for volunteer actions and personal injury should be investigated prior to implementation.

MEMORANDUM

To: Administrators and Department Supervisors

Fr: Howard Ward Howard

Re: Use of Volunteer Workers

Da: March 27, 1990

One of the issues in the College's Master Plan addresses the use of volunteers in the day-to-day operation of the College. The Institutional Research Office is directed to determine if the level of interest in the use of volunteers justifies further investigation.

The attached questionnaire asks for your input in five broad areas of concern: (1) the value of volunteers in your particular department or office; (2) the type of assistance, if any, volunteers could provide; (3) how volunteers could be recruited if their assistance is desirable; (4) how they would be directed; and (5) the advantages and disadvantages of volunteer service.

Responding to the questionnaire should require no more than fifteen minutes. A distribution list appears below. Please return your questionnaire to me on or before Friday, April 6, 1990.

Thank you for your participation.

Distribution List:

Dr. Turnage	Dr. Sieracki	Mr. Clark
Mr. Coleman	Dr. Lloyd	Ms. Nelson
Dr. Hinton	Ms. Gilkey	Ms. Cocke
Mr. Pendergrass	Mr. Nulanz	Ms. Lycett
Ms. Nicholson	Ms. Crocker	Ms. Miller
Ms. Updike	Ms. Borders	Ms. Pauli

VOLUNTEER QUESTIONNAIRE
March 27, 1990

_____ (Department)

_____ (Completer)

I. NEED [In your department only]

A. Do you have a personnel need which could be satisfied by volunteer assistance?

_____ YES (Please continue with question B.

_____ NO (Go no further. Please return questionnaire)

B. How many volunteers would be useful?

_____ 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ More than three

C. How many total hours per semester would you use volunteers?
Please use the following codes:

a. under 40 b. 41-80 c. 81-160
d. 161-320 e. 321-480 f. 481-640
g. over 640

Fall _____ Spring _____ Summer _____

II. TYPE OF ASSISTANCE [What tasks could/would a volunteer perform for you] (Please check all that apply)

A. _____ Answering telephone
B. _____ Typing
C. _____ Duplicating
D. _____ Filing
E. _____ Testing
F. _____ Enhancing Grounds
G. _____ Cataloging
H. _____ Greeting Public
I. _____ Recordkeeping
J. _____ Data Entry
K. _____ Distributing Mail
L. _____ Other (List)

III. RECRUITMENT [How could volunteers become aware of your needs?]

A. What media should be used? (Please check all that apply)

1. _____ Newspapers
2. _____ Newsletters
3. _____ Word-of-mouth
4. _____ Other (Please list)

(p2 ev)

B. Are students acceptable (excepting tests)?

_____ Yes _____ No

C. Who should be the volunteer's initial point of contact? (Please choose only one)

1. _____ Personnel Officer 2. _____ Department Head

3. _____ Other _____

D. What should be the highest level of administrative approval required for final acceptance of a volunteer? (Please choose only one).

1. _____ President 2. _____ Appropriate Dean

3. _____ Personnel Officer 4. _____ Department Head

5. _____ Other _____

IV. DIRECTION [Who would supervise your volunteers] (Please indicate by circling code number).

	Dept. Head	Staff Worker	Other (Who)
A. Who would train	1	2	3
B. Who would assign tasks	1	2	3
C. Who would monitor results	1	2	3
D. Who would terminate	1	2	3

V. OPINION

A. What do you consider the inherent advantages of using volunteers?

B. What do you consider the inherent disadvantages of using volunteers?

Thank you for your participation. Please return this questionnaire to Howard Ward.

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